

Director, Coast Guard International Affairs

Address to Chief Petty Officer's Academy Class 135  
U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, CA, July 12, 2006

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Opening greetings/thanks to Master Chief Petty Officer Niece and distinguished guests and graduates.

I believe this it is a great opportunity for me to talk to you about how, and more importantly why, we are becoming an increasingly globally-focused Coast Guard, so you can convey to your "troops" the importance of international engagement, deployments and other activities. We don't, and never have, engaged internationally for its own sake. We engage internationally because is critical to furthering the Coast Guard's core missions of U.S. maritime safety and security, and mobility and environmental protection, and – and here's what's new -- because it is increasingly important to ensuring the national and homeland security of our country.

As Director of Coast Guard International Affairs and Foreign Policy Advisor to the Commandant, I sometimes feel responsible for keeping Admiral Allen up-to-date on everything, everywhere in the world, all-the-time! With a rapidly expanding U.S. Coast Guard presence internationally, keeping abreast of everything we're doing world-wide is a real challenge. I should tell you now that if you joined the Coast Guard instead of the Navy to stay closer to home, now is the time to re-think your future (or, for the Air Force Master Sergeants here tonight, if you think you'll never see your classmates overseas in the future, think again!). Let me give you just a quick overview of our current activities.

Today, we have over 170 personnel assigned overseas in 28 countries world-wide. Many of these positions are enlisted, like our Petty Officer First Class in Embassy Kingstown, Jamaica, and the CPO in our Embassy in Bogata, as well as personnel supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom with aircraft, boats, and cutters in Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. The new Homeland Security assistant attaché billet in Embassy Baghdad is also reserved for a Coast Guard chief petty officer or chief warrant.

In addition to large operations in Guam and Puerto Rico, our men and women also participate in Operation Bahamas and Turks, and Caicos in the Bahamas. Operationally, we have hundreds of men and women serving in the air and at sea, in C-130s flying anti-drug missions with host nation riders, and on cutters conducting joint patrols with foreign navies and coast guards in their territorial waters.

After the Titanic hit an iceberg and sank in 1912, we helped form the International Ice Patrol the very next year. Now we partner with 17 other countries to keep shipping lanes open and international commerce flowing. On the other side of the country, Guam-based SEQUOIA visits small South Pacific islands, installing and fixing Aids to Navigation devices. To our south, we also have High Endurance Cutters in the Caribbean and off the coasts of South America. For example, the port of Manta, Ecuador now receives a visit by a 378-foot cutter about every month. Because of their boarding expertise and unique law enforcement authorities, Coast Guard law enforcement detachments (LEDETs) are on almost every Navy frigate south of our borders in the Eastern Pacific and in the Caribbean Sea. International partners in the Caribbean, such as the Dutch, also carry U.S. Coast Guard LEDETs aboard.

All the international partnerships I've mentioned above are in support of our traditional missions (maritime safety and security, maritime mobility, environmental protection). Again, our interaction with international partners, particularly in our "near-abroad" (the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, Canada, Russia) has always been important in helping us perform our own missions. We don't do it to be nice or because it's fun – we cannot operate effectively in support of our missions without the help of our neighbors. We must, for example, cooperate with Canada and Russia and Mexico in fisheries enforcement, and Search and Rescue, with Latin America and Caribbean countries in Alien Migrant Interdiction Operations and Counterdrug, and with Canada in icebreaking. However, except in times of war, the Coast Guard very rarely engaged internationally to meet larger national and/or homeland security objectives.

That is changing, and the implications of that change are many.

That change – greater emphasis on national and homeland security, and a greater role for the Coast Guard in furthering it – explains why we now have Coast Guard personnel in far away places like Beijing, China; Baku, Azerbaijan; and Jakarta, Indonesia. It explains why the number of billets we have at Activities Europe in the Netherlands and at Activities Far East in Japan and at the Marine Inspection Detachment in Singapore have doubled in recent years. It explains why the International Training Division at Yorktown (which sends teams throughout the world to train foreign maritime services in Coast Guard core competencies and, on any given day has teams deployed in eight countries) gets nearly two times the number of requests for international training than it has the capacity to fill each year.

And this is the message I want to leave you with today . . . The increasing focus on maritime security post 9/11 has had profound implications for the Coast Guard not just domestically, but also internationally. The lesson of 9/11 is that threats far from our shores – even in waters and ports on the other side of the world – if not addressed, can impact our homeland. For that reason, we have become increasingly engaged with countries adjacent to key international maritime trade routes, such as the Straits of Malacca, and also with countries whose ports are visited by ships bound for the U.S. In fact, the post-9/11 Maritime Transportation Security Act required the Coast Guard to establish a program to assess the effectiveness of anti-terrorism measures at ALL such ports WORLDWIDE, hence the increase in our marine inspection units in Rotterdam, Singapore and Japan.

There's also a growing recognition that we serve as the model for the vast majority of countries around the world. Most countries don't need blue water navies, they need Coast Guard-like forces to secure their maritime borders against dangerous threats to national and international security – whether it's terrorists, drug traffickers, illegal fishing, pollution prevention, people drowning, boats sinking, etc.

Couple the recognition that we are the “right model” with the post 9/11 recognition that many countries face significant maritime challenges which, if not addressed, could someday reach our shores, and you have great clamor internationally for the Coast Guard skills, training, expertise and personnel.

Our international engagement is growing and that engagement is occurring further and further from our shores. Cutters RUSH and SEQUOIA just visited Shanghai and Quindao, China – they were the first-ever major USCG cutters to make port calls in China. In Quindao, RUSH embarked a Chinese Fisheries Law Enforcement rider.<sup>[1]</sup> While RUSH is in the Western Pacific, they are participating in joint patrols and forming close working relationships with the Japanese Coast Guard. During the remainder of the deployment they will also join in exercises with Australian Customs, the Indian Coast Guard, the Korean Navy, and the Russian Border Guard.

Visiting regions of growing strategic importance to U.S. national interests has become an important mission of the Coast Guard, again in support of larger national objectives. During last summer's three-month BEAR deployment, the ship made port calls in three North African Islamic and in five West African countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea. BEAR's chiefs and petty officers conducted training with our African counterparts – many of whom had never heard of the U.S. Coast Guard. BEAR's visits to Algeria, Benin, Equatorial Guinea and Ghana were firsts for a U.S. Coast Guard cutter to this part of the world. This summer, the CGC NORTHLAND is engaging in Africa and Eastern Europe and following on with the great work done by the officers and crew of BEAR.

I talked about the Coast Guard serving as a model for the vast majority of the world's maritime services. Throughout my international career, I've discovered that one of the most unique things about the armed services of the United States – to include the Coast Guard – is our senior enlisted personnel. The U.S. is virtually unique in that we give our enlisted people – in all our Military forces – leadership training early in their careers, and, more importantly, in that we expect them to *BE* leaders.

We value the enlisted workforce as the backbone of the service. Our service members are not conscripts. This is often not the case in other countries. We provide the example of recognition and respect

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<sup>1</sup> "Rider" is a shortened form of "shiprider," a standing authority to embark law enforcement (LE) officials on platforms of the parties, which officials may then authorize to perform certain law enforcement actions.

for the enlisted corps to other nations and encourage them to develop leadership and learn work skills at all levels.

You may ask: “With so many Coast Guard resources deployed and operating in other countries, what’s left for us at home?” Again, foreign operations and training are aimed at enhancing other countries’ capabilities in maritime missions so that they can address threats before they reach U.S. waters. Over the long-term, these countries will be able to complete missions without Coast Guard support, leaving the maritime domain safer and more secure for everyone.

So, if you don’t already have an official passport, you may need to get one very, very, soon. We also do that in International Affairs!

Thank you.